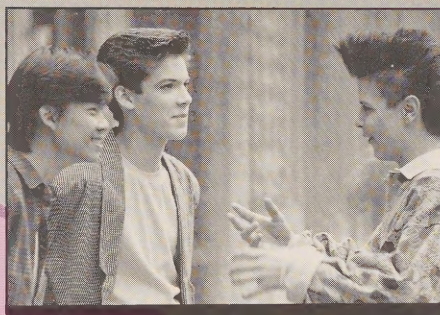


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National Survey on Drinking and Driving 1988

Overview Report



Health and Welfare
Canada

Santé et Bien-être social
Canada

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National Survey on Drinking and Driving 1988

Overview Report



Published by the authority of the
Minister of National Health and Welfare
1989

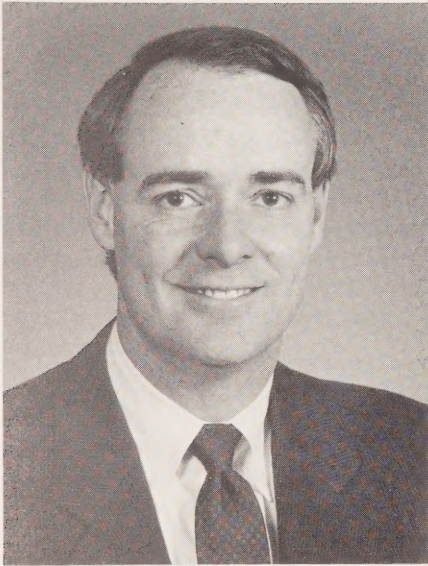
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Foreword from the Minister



It is with great pride that I introduce the Overview Report on the National Survey on Drinking and Driving 1988. The survey was carried out by Statistics Canada on behalf of Health and Welfare Canada in March, 1988. Approximately 10 000 adult Canadians (1000 from each province) were interviewed during the course of the survey.

The survey focused upon the respondents' attitudes, beliefs and behaviours about impaired driving. It also examined what actions Canadians were taking to prevent impaired driving and what they thought should be done to prevent Canadians from driving while under the influence of alcohol.

The next National Survey on Drinking and Driving will take place in 1992. Evaluations such as this are an important aspect of the government's Long Term National Program on Impaired Driving, introduced in May 1987. The federal/provincial/territorial initiative is aimed at reducing the toll of deaths and injuries on our highways by making it socially unacceptable for people to drink and drive. The program is primarily targeted at young people between the ages of 16 and 24, because alcohol is a factor in the majority of the accidents which involve Canadians in this age group.

The results of the survey are, to some extent, encouraging: an increasing number of Canadians

are strongly concerned about impaired driving. The results also show that Canadians are aware there are no simple solutions and that we still have much work to do. Cooperative, concerted actions are required if we are to reduce the losses that accumulate: each year, some 1800 Canadians are killed and another 56 000 injured as a result of alcohol-related accidents.

Although the Overview Report will naturally be of interest to professionals involved in reducing alcohol and drug abuse and impaired driving, it is written in non-technical language and will, I believe, be appreciated by a broader, more general audience. I think it will be of particular interest to key influencers and policy-makers concerned with impaired driving: the basis of informed action is current, timely and accurate information such as this report provides.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Perrin Beatty".

The Honourable Perrin Beatty
Minister of National Health
and Welfare

The Survey

The National Survey on Drinking and Driving was a telephone survey undertaken by the Health Promotion Directorate of Health and Welfare Canada and conducted on its behalf by Statistics Canada in March of 1988. Using random-digit dialing technology to contact households all across the country, the survey targeted Canadians aged between 16 and 69. Residents of the Yukon and the Northwest Territories were not included in the survey, since different methodologies must be used in these jurisdictions. Also excluded were full-time residents of institutions and — because of the collection methodology — people living in households without a telephone (approximately 2% of Canada's population). The response rate was over 80%. In total, almost 10 000 Canadians, nearly 1000 in each of the 10 provinces, participated in the survey.

Researchers or others who may be interested in obtaining more information on the National Survey on Drinking and Driving may write to Health Promotion Studies Unit, Health Promotion Directorate, Health and Welfare Canada, Ottawa K1A 1B4.

Drinking and Driving in Canada: An Overview

Drinking and driving are two separate activities. Linked together, they can become lethal. Because of this, not only is it important that we know who today's drinking drivers are, but we must also find out which groups might combine these two activities in the future. A good starting point is to establish who in Canada are the drivers, and who are the drinkers.

Who drives?

The vast majority (85%) of Canadians aged 16 to 69 are drivers; that is, they report having driven a car, truck, van or motorcycle in the past three years. More men than women drive — 93%, compared to 78%. Men also drive more often than women, and they cover a greater distance each year. University-educated Canadians are more likely to drive than are those with an elementary education. Canadians with higher household incomes (\$40,000 or more) have a higher likelihood of being drivers than those in lower-income groups (93%, compared to 67% of those with a household income of \$10,000 or less).

The youngest drivers — those aged 16 to 24 — and the oldest ones — those 65 and over — drive less often than Canadians in all other age groups. Drivers aged 65 and over also tend to cover less distance each year than those in other age groups.

Who drinks?

When asked whether they have had a drink in the last 12 months, nearly 8 out of 10 Canadians aged 16 to 69 say yes. Men

are more likely than women (83%, compared to 75%) to report that they drink. Also, higher rates of alcohol consumption are reported by more university-educated people (89%) than by those with an elementary education (54%); and by people with a household income of \$40,000 or over (87%, compared to 70% of those with a household income of less than \$10,000).

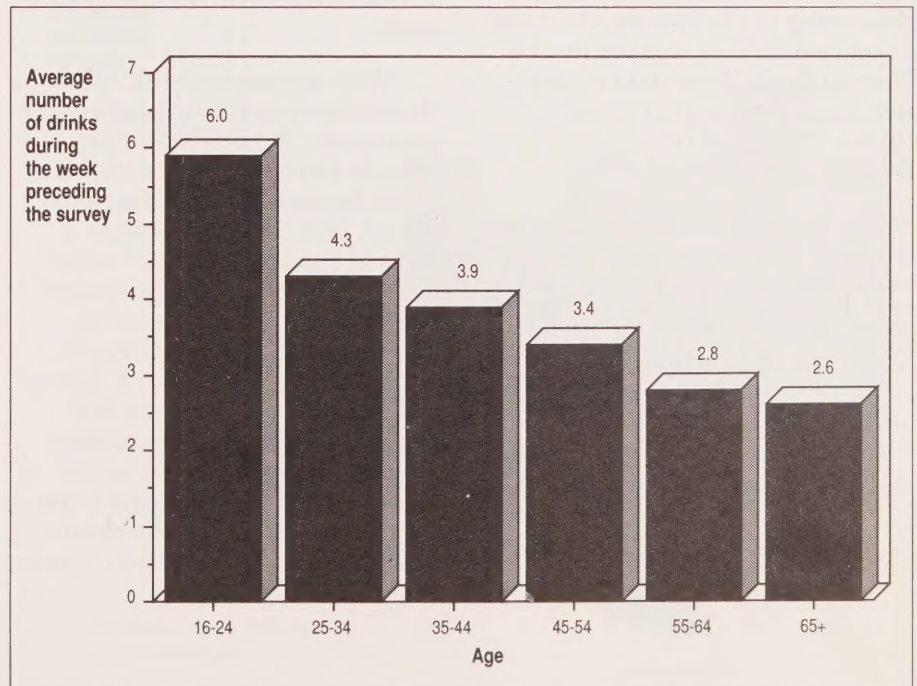
Single Canadians (83%) are more likely to drink than those in any other marital status group. Also, younger Canadians have a higher likelihood of being drinkers than do their older counterparts.

The majority of those who drink (69%) say they do so once a week or less on average, with

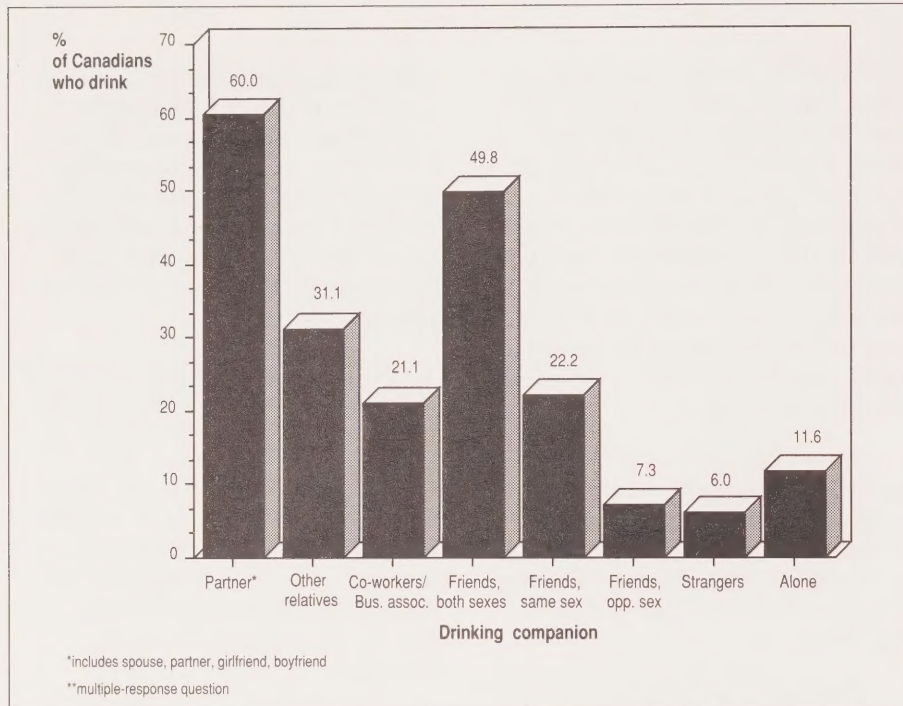
older Canadians and men drinking more often than younger Canadians and women. However, when it comes to average quantities consumed per week, younger people drink more than those who are older, and men consume twice as many drinks per week as women.

Canadians drink in a variety of different settings. By far the most popular place to drink seems to be at home — 62% report doing so during the past week, compared to 31% in a bar, tavern or pub, which is the next most popular drinking location. A considerable proportion of people also report drinking in restaurants (23%), at other people's houses (22%), and at various social events, such as

Average number of drinks consumed in the week preceding the survey, by age, age 16 to 69, Canada, 1988



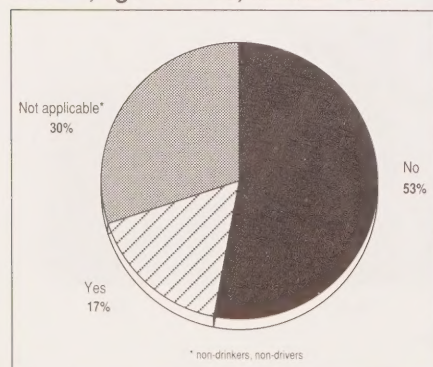
"In the past 7 days, have you had a drink together with any of the following people?", age 16 to 69, Canada, 1988**



weddings (15%) during the past week.

With whom do people drink? According to the survey, the most popular drinking companion for Canadians is their spouse, partner, boyfriend or girlfriend (60%). Many also drink with friends of both sexes (50%),

"During the past 12 months, have you driven a motor vehicle after having two or more drinks in the previous hour?", age 16 to 69, Canada 1988



relatives (31%) and co-workers or business associates (21%). Only 6% of Canadians report drinking with strangers during the past week.

Why do people drink? The three most popular explanations given are: "I drink when my friends are drinking" (61%), "I drink because I enjoy the taste" (59%), and "I drink because it adds to the enjoyment of social occasions" (56%). A significant proportion of people seem to associate drinking with fun — 44% say it puts them in a "party" mood, and 41% say it makes them feel happy. Being under stress (19%) or sad and lonely (10%) are among the least popular reasons advanced by people in Canada to explain their drinking.

Who drives after drinking?

In the past year, 17% of Canadians aged 16 to 69, an estimated three million adult Canadians, have driven after having two or more drinks in the preceding hour. This figure represents 24% — or about a quarter — of those who say they are both drinkers and drivers.

Men are three times more likely than women to report driving after drinking (26%, compared to 8%). They also do it more often — 17% of men report having driven after drinking on three or more occasions in the past month, compared to 9% of women. Younger Canadians are more likely to drive after drinking than are their older counterparts — 23% of those under 34 have driven after drinking in the past year, compared to 13% of people aged 45 to 54. The likelihood that single people and those in higher-income groups will drive after drinking is also quite high — almost one-quarter of those in each category report having done so.

Those with the highest incidence of driving are people who drink with strangers (58%), people who drink alone (48%) and those who report drinking with co-workers and business associates (48%), or with friends of the opposite sex (47%).

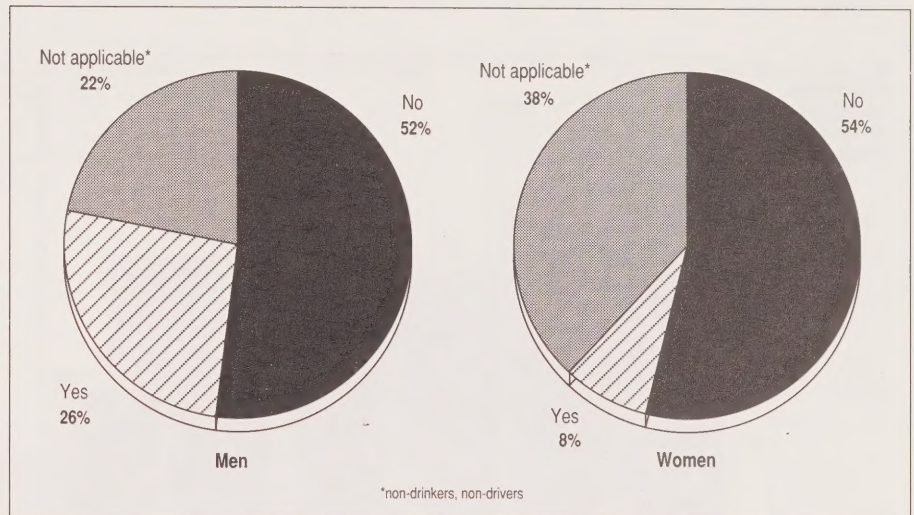
Focusing on those Canadians who are truly "at risk" of driving after drinking — that is, people who report both driving a motor vehicle and drinking an alcoholic beverage during the past year — by far the highest rate of drinking and driving is reported by youth aged 16 to 24: thirty-two percent of this group report driving after drinking in the past

year. In particular, young men in this age group seem to be most at risk, with 41% reporting having driven after drinking in the past year. Rates of drinking and driving appear to decrease as age increases, with respondents over the age of 45 reporting the lowest rates.

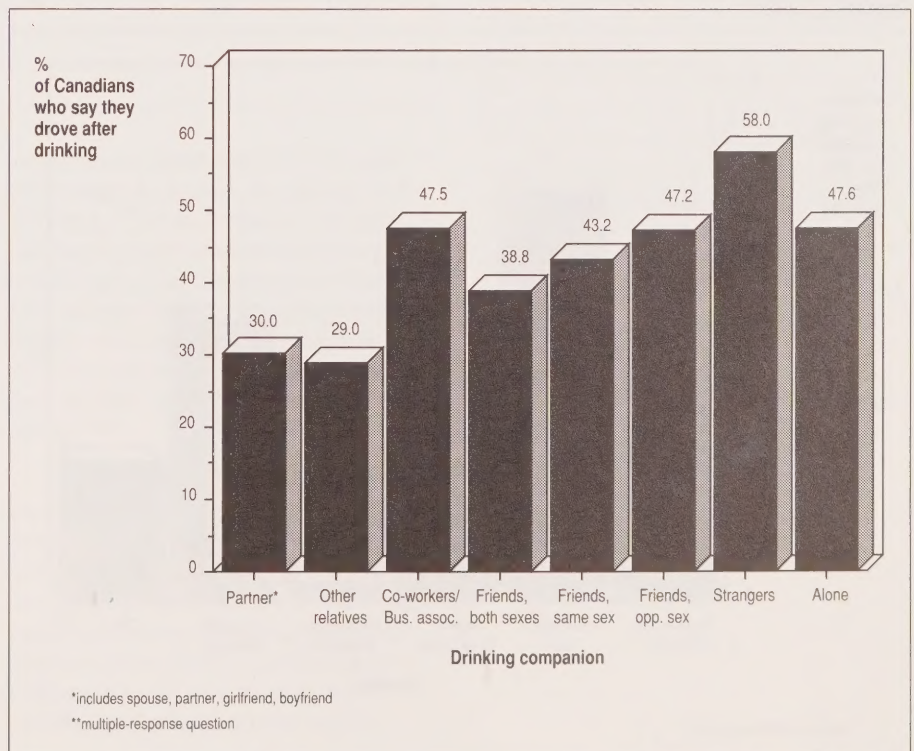
These findings are particularly relevant in light of statistics on accidents involving impaired driving. Because more young drivers drink, they are much more likely to be involved in a drinking-and-driving accident than are older people. In fact, young drivers who drink account for a disproportionate number of traffic fatalities.

About one-quarter of all those who report drinking and driving say that they have been in situations where they *had* to drive after drinking too much in the past year. The people who say this tend to be younger and better educated than those who do not. Not wanting to leave the car (40%), a lack of public transportation (27%), a lack of desirable alternatives (24%) and feeling responsible for getting other people home (14%) are among the reasons people give to explain why they had to drive while impaired. Only 2% attribute their action to an unexpected emergency.

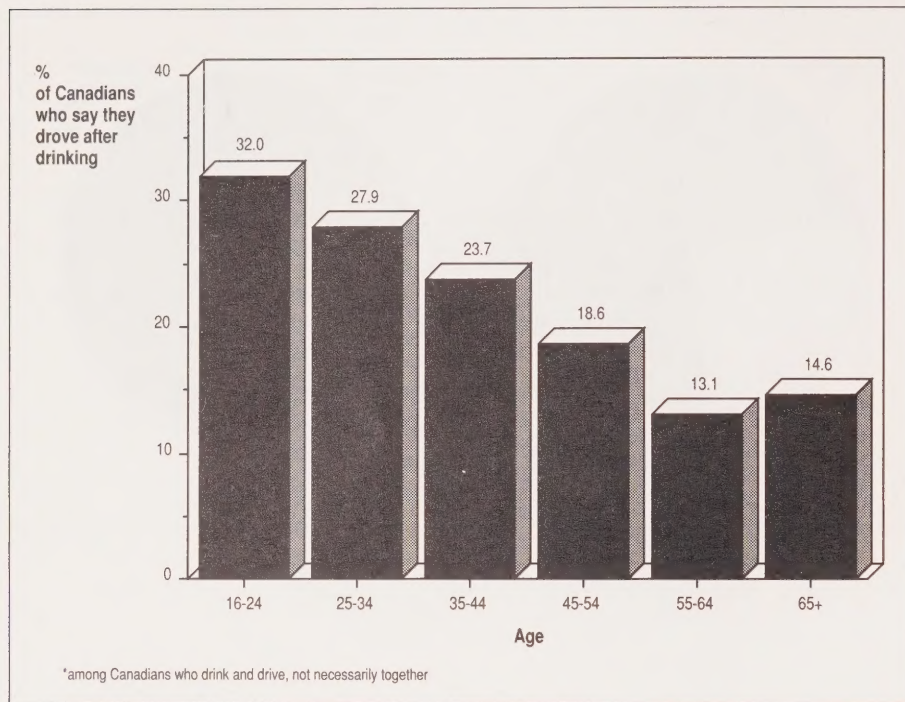
Canadians who say that, in the year preceding the survey, they drove after having had 2+ drinks in the last hour, by sex, age 16 to 69, Canada, 1988



"In the past 7 days, have you had a drink together with any of the following people?", among those who report driving after drinking, age 16 to 69, Canada, 1988**



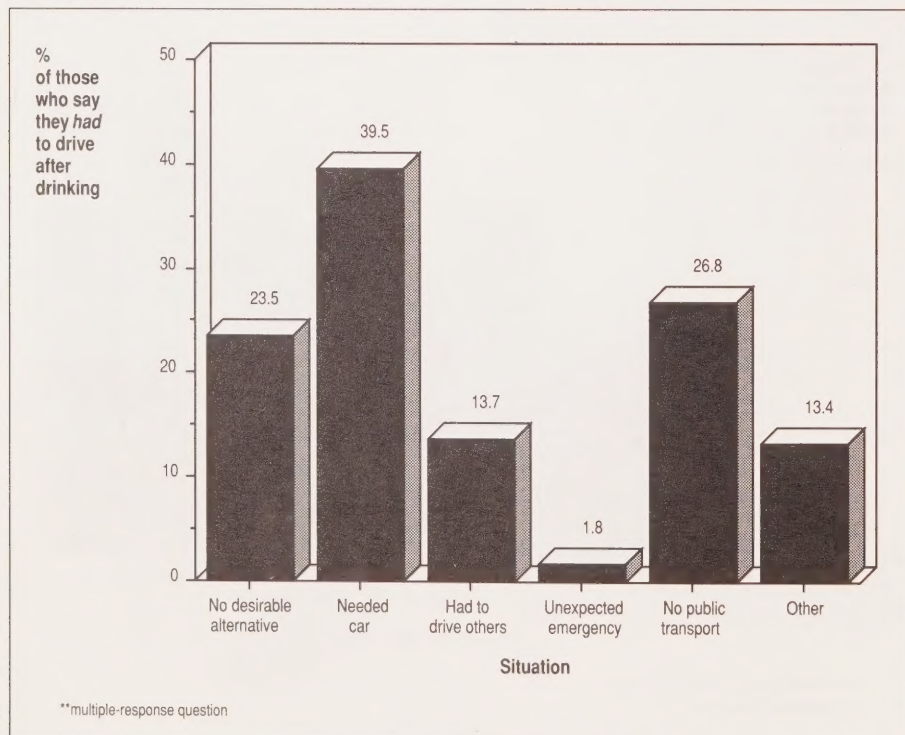
Canadians who say that, in the year preceding the survey, they drove after having 2+ drinks in the last hour,* by age, age 16 to 69, Canada, 1988



Is the location of drinking related to drinking-and-driving behaviour? Of the Canadians who say they have had a drink in a bar, pub or tavern in the past seven days, 20% also say that in the same period they have driven after having two or more drinks in the preceding hour. Of those who report having had a drink in a restaurant during the past week, 13% admit having driven afterwards. This compares with 8% of those who have had a drink at someone else's home, and 7% of those who have had a drink in their own home.

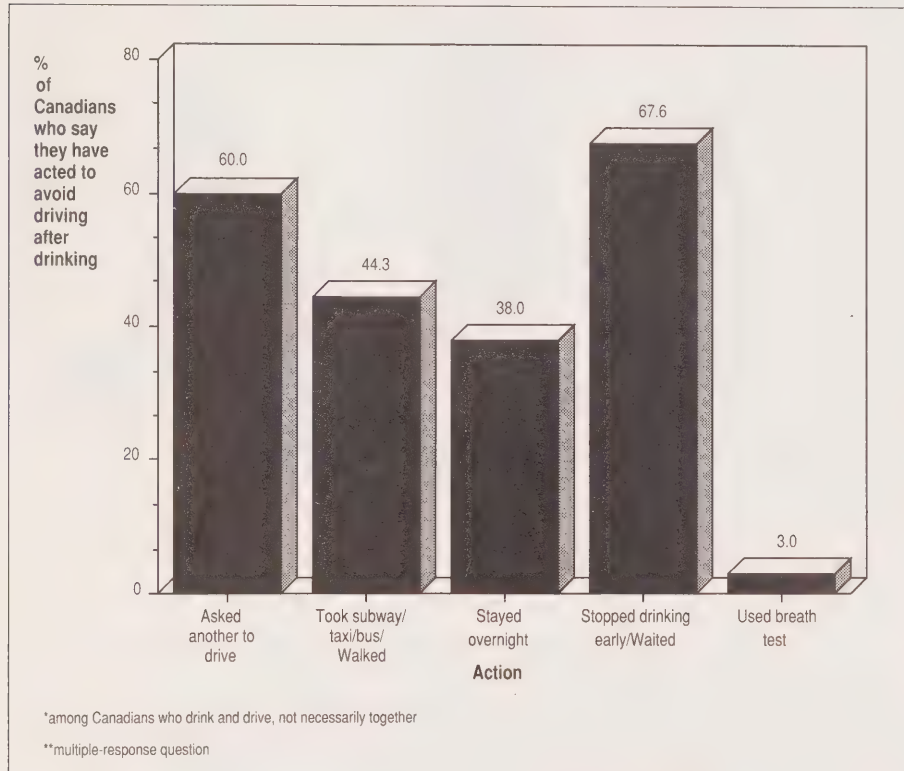
Perhaps contrary to expectation, people who drink daily are not necessarily the ones who drink and drive the most: those who report drinking slightly less often, but in greater quantities, are actually more likely to drive after drinking.

"During the past 12 months, were there any situations in which you *had* to drive after having too much to drink?" If yes, "What were they?", age 16 to 69, Canada, 1988**



Avoidance and Prevention: What Tactics Are People Using?

"During the past 12 months, have you done any of the following in order to avoid driving after you had too much to drink?"; * age 16 to 69, Canada, 1988**



Many Canadians are taking steps to avoid drinking and driving; they are also trying to prevent people they know from doing it. In order to design effective intervention programs, we need to find out which Canadians are the most likely to act, what actions they take and why, and which approaches are most successful.

Avoiding driving after drinking

More than a third (38%) of Canadians aged 16 to 69 say that, during the past year, they have

acted in at least one of five specific ways to avoid drinking and driving. These actions include asking someone else to drive; walking or taking another form of transportation; staying overnight; waiting an hour before driving, or using a breathalyser test to check their blood alcohol level.

Among people who say they have tried to avoid driving after drinking, the tactic most often used (68%) is to stop drinking early, or to wait at least one hour before driving. Asking someone else to drive (60%), walking or taking a taxi, bus or subway (44%), and staying overnight

(38%) are the next most-used approaches. Taking a breathalyser test to check their blood alcohol level is the tactic least used by drinkers. Men report using each of these approaches more frequently than do women.

Approximately half (49%) of those who have tried to avoid driving after drinking say they feared having an accident, while just over one-third (37%) say they were afraid of getting caught by the police. Another 18% were afraid they might lose their driver's licence or be jailed. Moral considerations also seem to be important — 39% of Canadians simply felt it was wrong to drink and drive.

In all age groups and for both sexes (54% of women, 45% of men), the fear of having an accident is most frequently reported as a deterrent. However, more men (21%) than women (13%) say they were afraid of losing their licence or going to jail. It seems that moral considerations rank higher with women than with men — 44% of women say they tried to avoid driving while impaired because they thought it was wrong, compared to 35% of men.

When an occasion is likely to involve drinking, one way of preventing the drinkers from

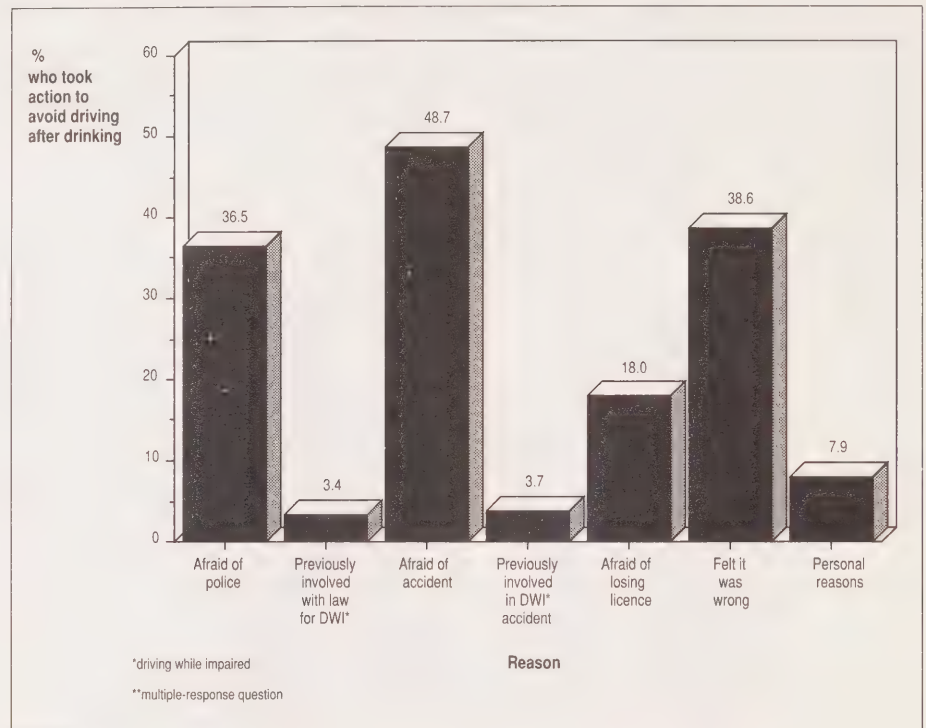
driving is for someone to volunteer ahead of time not to drink — to be the sober driver, in effect. The survey results show that this is quite a common practice. Roughly half of Canadian drivers have agreed to be the non-drinking driver on some occasion during the past year. They include a higher proportion of women than men (56%, compared to 43%) and a higher proportion of young Canadians than older ones: two-thirds of drivers in the 16 to 24 age group have been the sober driver, compared to only 13% of drivers over 65.

In the vast majority of cases, people appear to make the “sober-driver” arrangement privately among themselves. Only 4% of drivers report having taken part in a designated-driver program offered by a drinking establishment.

Being prevented from drinking and driving

Very few Canadians (6%) acknowledge that someone else has tried to stop them from taking the wheel after drinking. This represents 9% of men, but only 2% of women. As far as age goes, younger drivers (16 to 24) are more likely to say they have had this experience than are older drivers (12%, compared to 1% for those 55 and over). What most people seem to agree on, however, is that when someone else tries to stop them from driving after drinking too much, it usually works — 87% report that in their own case, the intervention by another person succeeded. Usually (60% of cases), the person who intervenes is a

Reasons for trying to avoid driving after drinking, among those who report taking action to avoid driving after drinking, age 16 to 69, Canada, 1988**



friend. About a third of the time it is the driver's spouse. Among the least likely intervenors are other family members (11%), servers in drinking establishments and strangers.

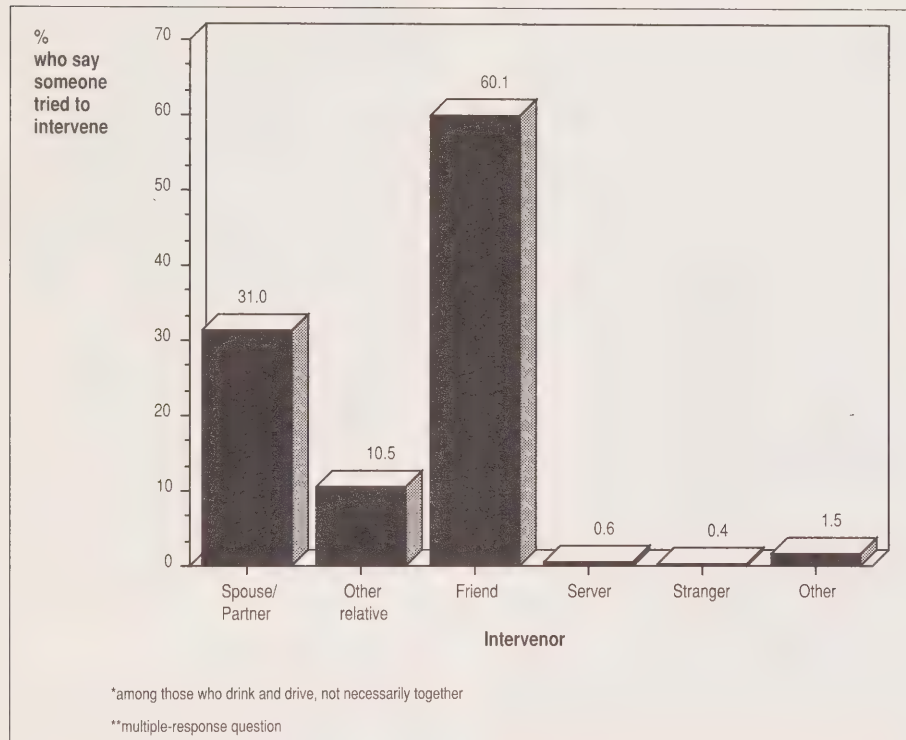
Stopping others from drinking and driving

More than 4 out of 10 Canadians aged 16 to 69 say that, during the past year, they have tried to stop someone who has had too much to drink from driving. (It is interesting to note that far fewer — only 6 in 100 — admit that someone else has intervened to stop them from driving.) Most often they simply ask the person not to drive (68%), but they also report trying other approaches, such as offering to take the person home (59%), inviting him or her to stay over (50%), suggesting a taxi, bus or subway (38%)

as an alternative, or even taking the driver's car keys away (24%). The particular approach chosen seems to depend on their relationship to the person who has been drinking. With a friend, for example, people usually suggest staying over as an alternative, or they offer to drive the friend home themselves. With someone other than a friend or family member, they are more likely to suggest a taxi, bus or subway as an alternative.

Women deal with the situation somewhat differently than men, especially in two areas: they are more likely to ask the person concerned not to drive (72%, compared to 64% for men),

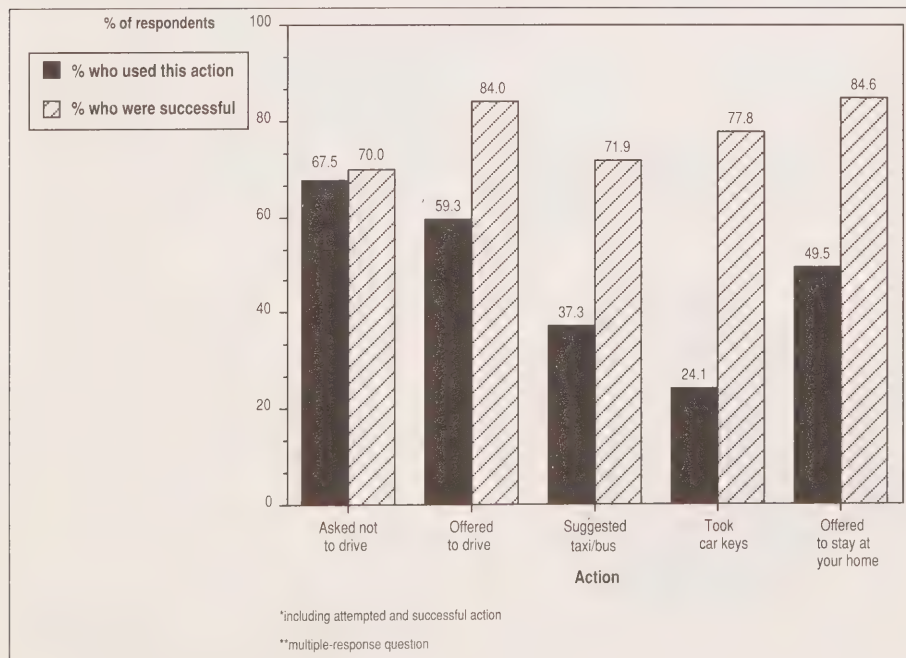
“During the past 12 months, has anyone tried to prevent you from driving because they thought you had too much to drink?” If yes, “Who tried to stop you from driving the last time this happened?”* age 16 to 69, Canada, 1988**



and more likely to try to take away his or her car keys (28%, compared to 21% for men). Also, women intervene more often with family members than men do.

In general, people's efforts to stop others from taking the wheel after drinking too much appear to pay off. This is true regardless of the intervenor's age or sex. The most successful tactic is asking the person to stay over — 85% of people who report having tried this say they have been successful. Offering someone a ride home seems to work almost as well, with a reported success rate of 84%. Also effective are taking away the person's car keys (78%), and suggesting some other form of transportation, such as a taxi, bus or subway (72%). All in all, the survey results seem to suggest that the best chance of success lies in proposing some alternative to people who have had too much to drink, rather than merely asking them not to drive.

Action taken by Canadians in the year preceding the survey to prevent others from driving after drinking,* age 16 to 69, Canada, 1988**



Canadians of all ages are more likely to report having intervened with a friend than with a family member or another person. However, as people get older, it becomes more likely that the target of their intervention will be a family member.

The Social Environment: Does It Affect Attitudes and Behaviour?

To develop successful intervention programs, we need to find out how people's social environment affects their attitudes and behaviour. If the people around us drink and drive, are we more likely to do so ourselves? Why do people ride with friends or relatives who are impaired? Are Canadians encountering police road checks in their community?

Family and friends

Eighteen percent of Canadians aged 16 to 69 say they have a friend or relative who has driven after drinking too much in the past 30 days. People aged 16 to 24 are twice as likely as those

aged 35 to 44, and six times as likely as those over 65, to say they have a friend or relative who has driven while impaired in the past month (30%, 15% and 5% respectively). Those who say that a relative or friend drove after drinking are more likely than other Canadians to report that they themselves have done so (34%, compared to 14%). The proportions of men and women who report that a relative or friend has driven after drinking too much are about equal (20% to 17%).

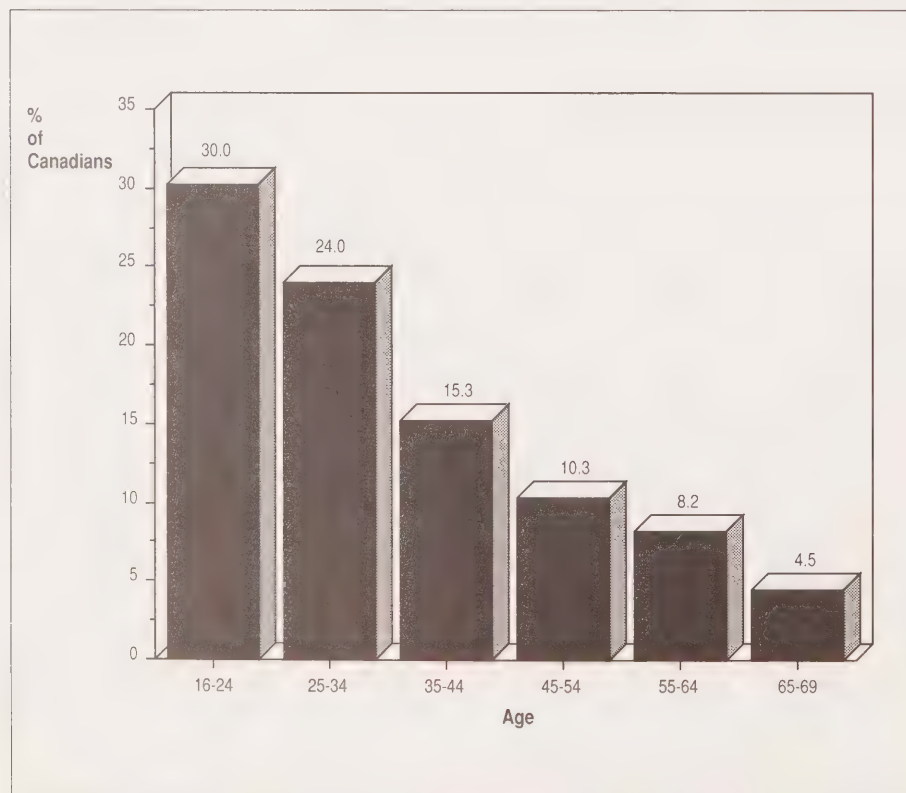
Twenty-seven percent of Canadians aged 16 to 24 and 22% of those aged 25 to 34 say they have

a friend or family member who has been found guilty of a drinking-and-driving offence in the past three years. This compares with only 10% of those aged 45 to 54. Twenty-nine percent of Canadians with friends or relatives who have been convicted of a drinking-and-driving offence also report drinking and driving themselves. This compares with only 15% of people whose relatives and friends have not been convicted of such an offence. More men than women report that a friend or relative has been convicted of a drinking-and-driving offence (21%, compared to 15%).

Riding with an impaired driver

The survey shows that a substantial number of people who ride with drivers they believe are impaired do not realize the risk they are taking. In the past 12 months, more than one-quarter of Canadians (27%) say they have been a passenger with a driver they believe had had too much to drink; of those, only 64% say they were concerned for their safety. Men ride more often than women with drivers who may be impaired, and when they do, they are less likely than women to be afraid for their safety (53%, compared to 78%). Canadians who have ridden with an impaired driver are much more likely to report that they drove after drinking themselves (42%, compared to 19% for those who have not). Those who say that they are concerned about their safety when riding with an impaired driver are less likely to report driving after drinking.

Canadians who say they have a close friend or relative who drove after drinking too much in the month preceding the survey, by age, age 16 to 69, Canada, 1988



What, typically, is the relationship between the passenger and the driver? Usually, they are friends (67%), but women are much less likely than men to say that they have accepted a ride with a friend who is impaired (45%, compared to 80%). Compared to men, however, women are more likely to say they have ridden with a spouse whose ability to drive was in doubt (16%, compared to only 2%).

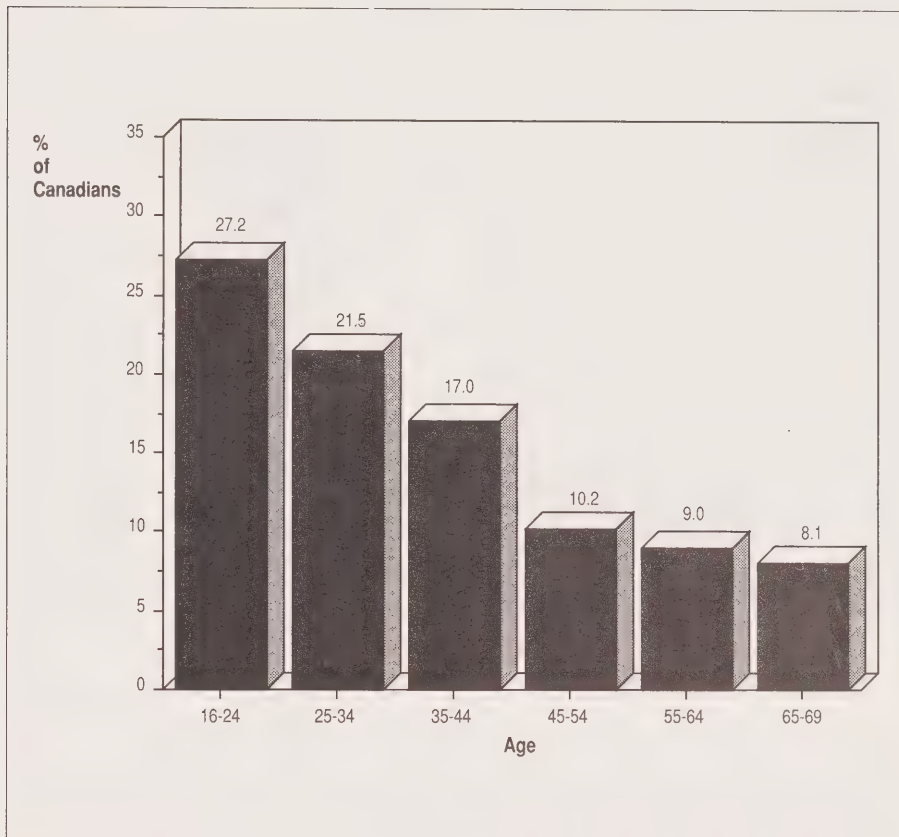
Riding in a car with someone they believe is impaired is much more common among younger people and those who are single than among other Canadians. The survey shows that 44% of those aged 16 to 24, compared to 20% of those aged 35 to 44, have been a passenger with an impaired driver.

The most popular reason given by passengers of both sexes and all ages for riding with an impaired driver is that no alternative transportation was available, an answer given by 46% of Canadians (51% of women and 42% of men). Not wanting to leave the driver or wanting to keep the driver alert comes in second at 11%, while 8% say that they did not have far to go. Finding it hard to say no is the reason given by 6%. More than one-quarter of Canadians aged 16 to 69 who report riding with a driver they believed was impaired say it was for a reason other than those mentioned in the questionnaire.

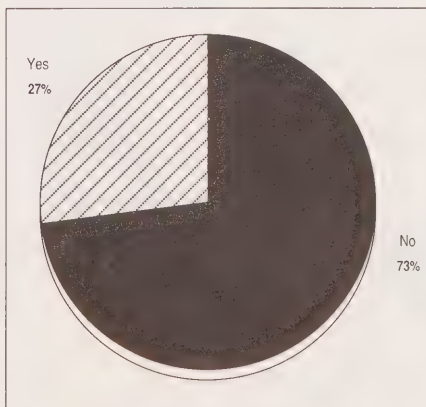
Police visibility

Police efforts to control drinking and driving appear to be fairly widespread — 45% of Canadians aged 16 to 69 say that, during the past three years, they have been stopped during a police road check; of these, more than

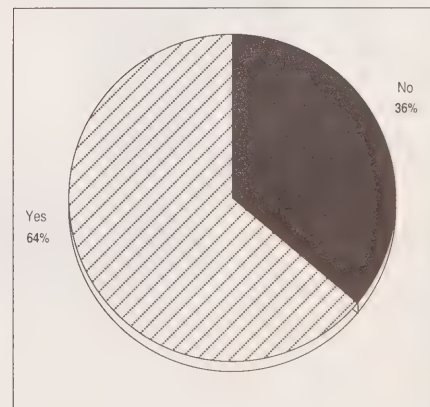
Canadians who say they have a close friend or relative who was convicted of a drinking-and-driving offence in the three years preceding the survey, by age, age 16 to 69, Canada, 1988



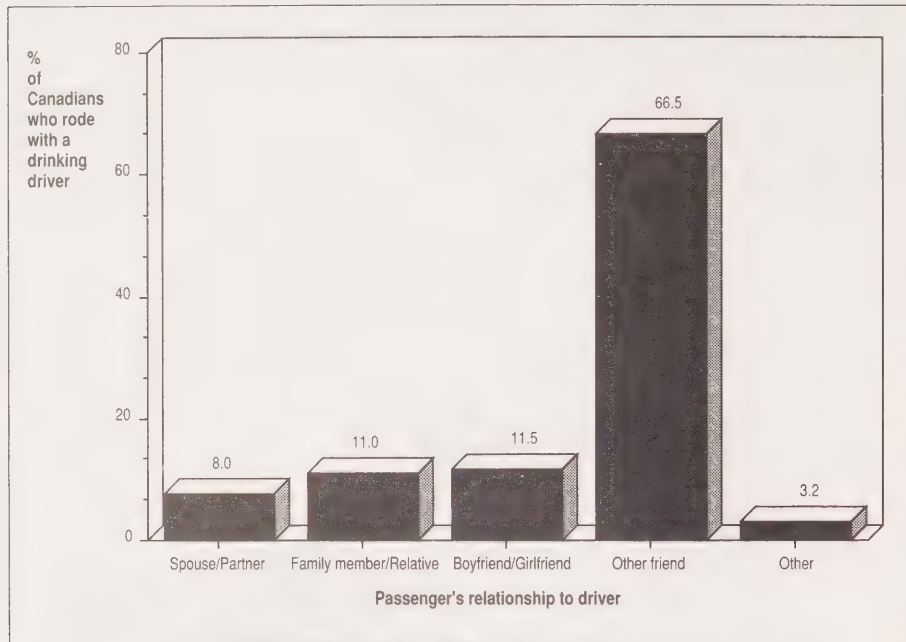
Canadians who rode with a driver they believed was impaired, in the 12 months preceding the survey, age 16 to 69, Canada, 1988



Passengers who were concerned about their safety the last time they rode with a driver who had had too much to drink, age 16 to 69, Canada, 1988



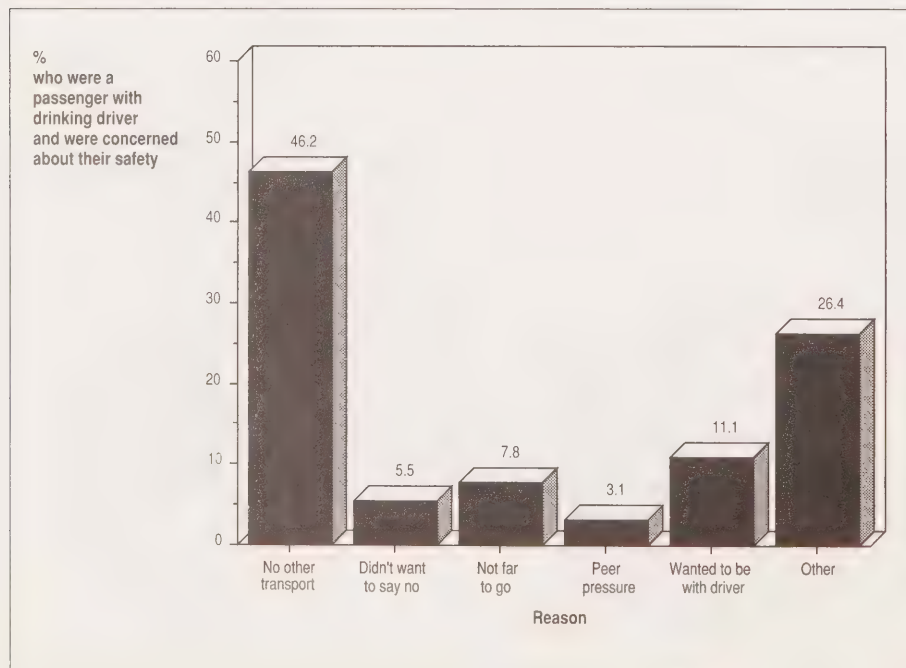
Passenger's relationship to drinking driver, among Canadians who rode with a drinking driver in the year preceding the survey, age 16 to 69, Canada, 1988



three-quarters (76%) thought it was a spot check for drinking and driving. Younger Canadians are more likely to report having been stopped during a road check which they believe was for drinking and driving. Although more men (51%) than women (38%) say they have been stopped, both sexes are equally likely to identify the road check as having been a drinking-and-driving spot check.

Of those Canadians who report having driven after drinking, 10% say they have been stopped on suspicion of drinking and driving, and 4% say a charge has actually been laid against them.

Reasons for being a passenger with a drinking driver, among Canadians who rode with a drinking driver in the year preceding the survey and were concerned about their safety, age 16 to 69, Canada, 1988



Attitudes and Beliefs: Do They Affect How People Act?

We need to know whether people act in accordance with their attitudes and beliefs. This means finding out what Canadians actually believe. Do they know the facts about drinking and driving? How much do they think someone can drink before driving? According to Canadians, how do the police forces and courts in Canada deal with drinking-and-driving offences?

How much does it take?*

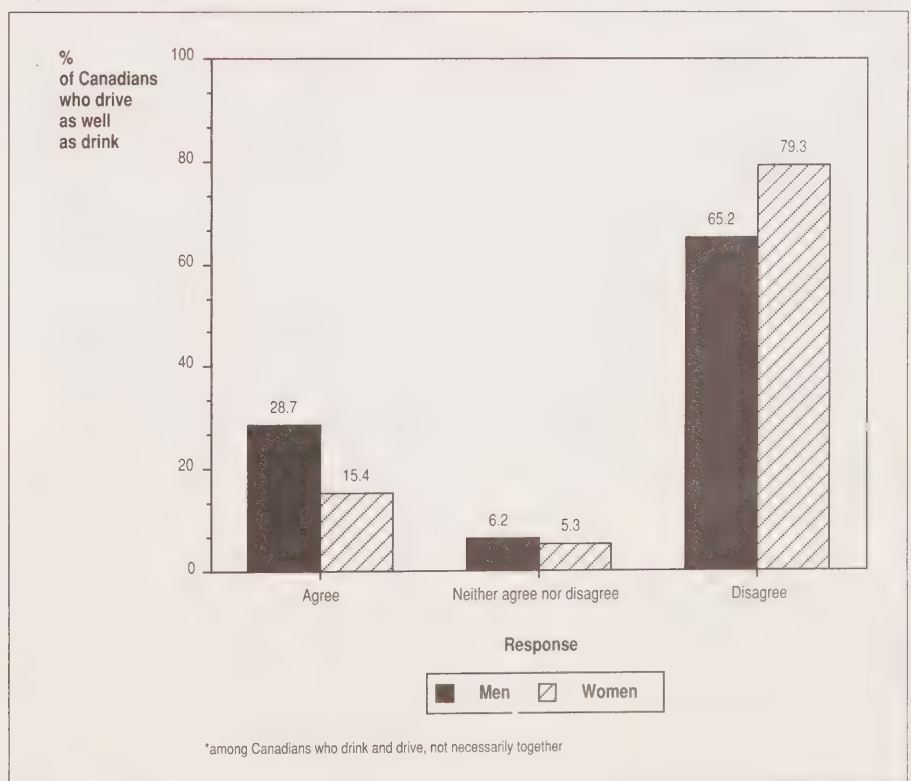
How many drinks do Canadians who both drink and drive think they can “hold”? Asked whether they agree that they need “a lot of drinks” before they feel impaired, 72% say no, while 23% say yes. Almost twice as many men as women say it usually takes a lot of drinks to make them feel impaired. Young people who drink as well as drive (32% aged 16 to 24) are also more confident about their ability to hold alcohol than are people in the 35 to 44 age group (20%). Perhaps most alarming is the fact that of those who agree they usually need a lot of drinks before feeling impaired, almost half report having driven after drinking.

Certain myths about drinking and driving may have been dispelled among Canadians who are both drinkers and drivers. For one thing, the large majority of this group (95%) do not agree that some people drive better after a few drinks, compared with a fraction (4%) who do. However, better attitudes and beliefs do not necessarily result in more responsible behaviour — almost one-quarter (24%) of those who disagree with the statement that some people drive better after a few drinks still say they have driven while impaired. As one might predict, drinking-and-driving behaviour is even more common among those who

believe a few drinks may actually improve driving ability — more than half of this group say they have driven after drinking.

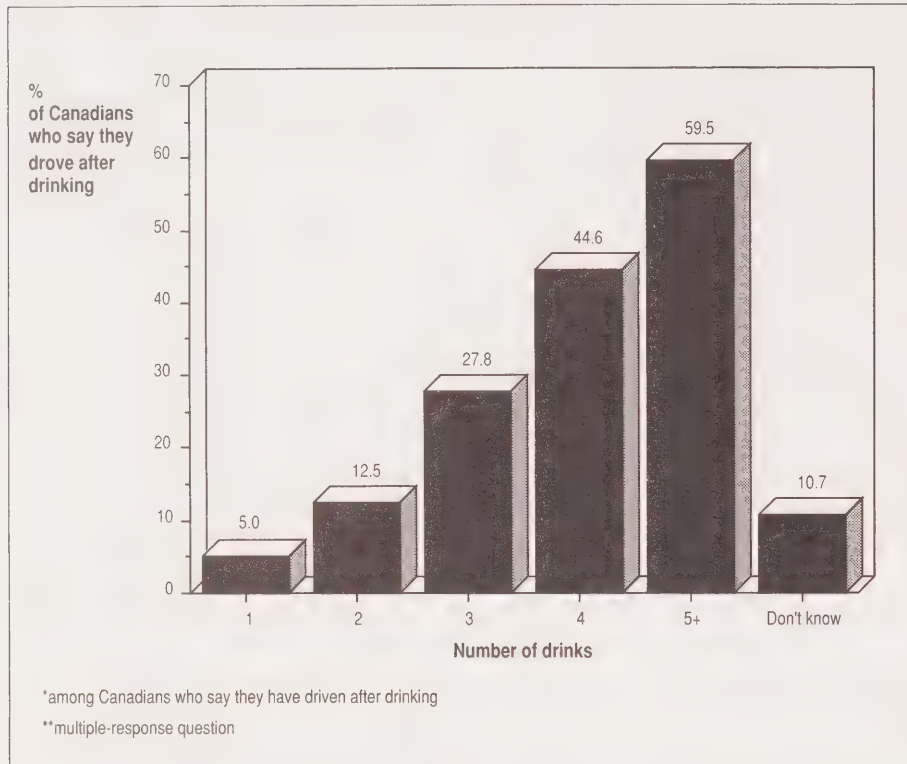
Almost all Canadians who both drink and drive believe their relatives and friends would disapprove if they were to drive while impaired. Yet this does not necessarily affect their behaviour. While a full 97% of this group think their family and friends would disapprove if they drove while impaired, 25% of them report doing so anyway. A mere 2% say their family and friends would not object to such behaviour; of these, half say they have driven after drinking.

Response to statement: “It usually takes a lot of drinks to make me feel impaired.”, * by sex, age 16 to 69, Canada, 1988



* This section of Chapter 4 explores the beliefs and behaviours of Canadians who both drink and drive. This group consists of those who say they drink and those who say they drive. It should not be assumed that all are drinking drivers.

“About how many drinks do you think you can have, over a 2-hour period, before your ability to drive becomes impaired?”,* among those who report driving after drinking, age 16 to 69, Canada, 1988**



Ninety-seven percent of Canadians aged 16 to 69 who both consume alcohol and drive feel that there is no excuse for driving after drinking. Despite this belief, 24% of this group report driving after drinking themselves. The proportion of drinking drivers is much higher among the 2% who feel that drinking and driving is justifiable in certain cases, with 64% of this group admitting that they have taken the wheel after drinking too much.

How much is too much? Thirty-three percent of Canadians who both drink and drive say that after two drinks during a

two-hour period, their ability to drive becomes impaired. However, another 28% say they can have three drinks in two hours before they feel impaired. More men than women give three or more drinks as their limit. Also, people aged 16 to 24 are more likely than those in any other age group to say they need five or more drinks before reaching the point where their ability to drive is impaired. In fact, alcohol has a much more pronounced effect on a young person's driving ability than it does on that of an older, more experienced driver. Among Canadians who drink as well as drive, 13% do not know how many drinks they can consume in a two-hour period before their ability to drive is in question.

Perhaps predictably, the more drinks people estimate they can have before their driving ability becomes impaired, the greater the likelihood that they have driven after drinking.

How many drinks do Canadians aged 16 to 69 who drink as well as drive believe they can have before reaching the legal limit of 80 mg of alcohol per 100 mL of blood, or .08%? Thirty-eight percent think they can have two drinks over a two-hour period, while 30% say they can consume three. Another 25% simply say they do not know how many drinks it takes them to reach the legal limit. The more drinks people think it takes, the greater the likelihood that they have driven after drinking — 32% of those who say they can have four drinks before reaching the legal limit, and 47% of those who say they can have five or more, also report that they have driven after drinking.

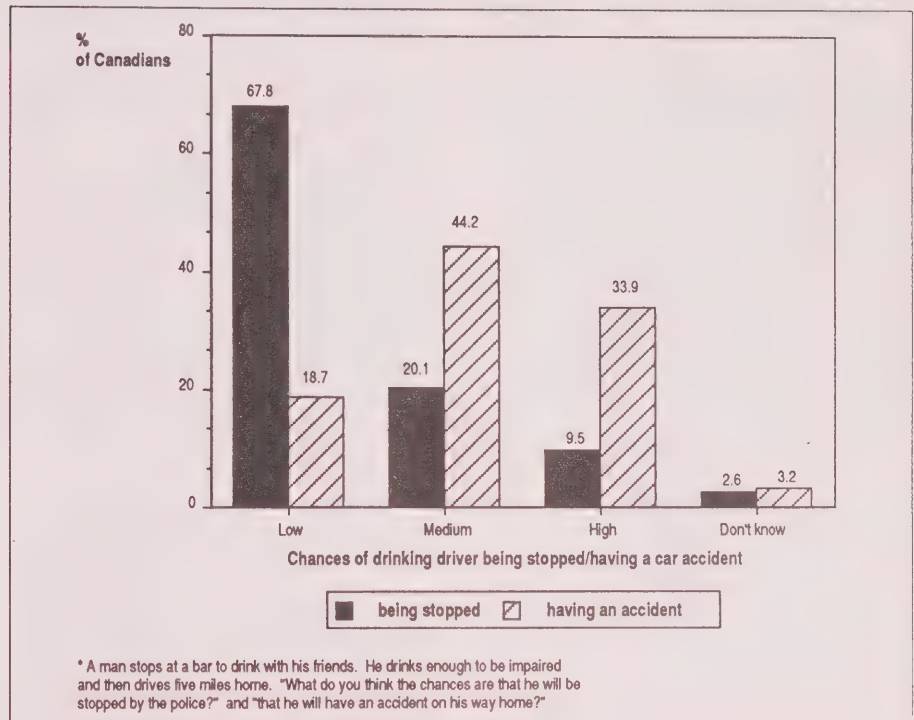
A drinking-and-driving scenario

A person goes to a bar after work to have a drink with friends, drinks enough to be impaired, and then drives five miles home.

In these circumstances, only a small proportion of Canadians (10%) think the chances are high that the police will stop the driver on the way home. However, more than a third (34%) believe the driver is highly likely to have an accident. The same people who think the impaired driver will *not* be stopped by police on the way home are the ones who are most likely to say they themselves have driven after drinking. However, those who think the chances are high that the impaired driver will have an accident are less likely to report drinking and driving themselves.

Having stopped the impaired driver, will the police lay a charge? Over half (54%) of

Responses to questions about a hypothetical drinking-and-driving situation,* age 16 to 69, Canada, 1988



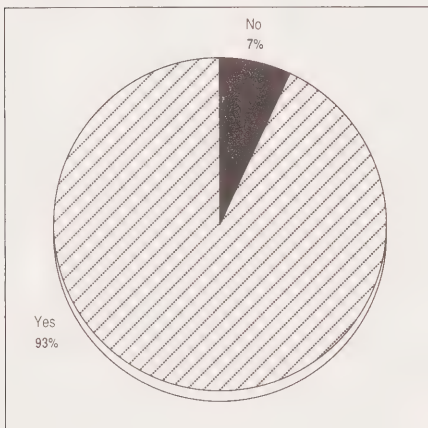
Canadians feel this is highly probable. Not unexpectedly, a higher proportion of those who think the driver is unlikely to be charged also say they have

driven after drinking. However, this group is also more likely to think that if the driver is charged, a drinking-and-driving conviction will follow.

Campaigns against Drinking and Driving in Canada

Across Canada many governments, groups and organizations have been working to reduce drinking and driving. New organizations are sprouting up all the time, and so are alternative transportation programs for

“Within the past 12 months, do you recall having seen or heard any advertising messages dealing with drinking and driving?”, age 16 to 69, Canada, 1988



drivers who have had too much to drink. In order to determine what more may be needed, we require some answers from Canadians. Are they being reached? Do they want to help reduce the problem? And how, if at all, do their awareness levels influence their drinking-and-driving behaviour?

Advertising against drinking and driving

In the past year, the vast majority (93%) of Canadians aged 16 to 69 — whether or not they report driving after drinking — recall having either seen or heard advertisements related to drinking and driving. Only a small fraction of the Canadians who have

driven after drinking (2%) claim they have not seen or heard any such advertising.

At 96%, young people aged 16 to 24 have the highest rate of awareness of all age groups. Canadians whose mother tongue is neither French nor English appear to be somewhat less conscious (88%) of advertising efforts in this area than either Francophones (95%) or Anglophones (94%).

Higher-income Canadians are more likely to recall having seen or heard ads on drinking and driving — 96% of those with a household income of \$40,000 or more, compared to 88% whose household income is \$10,000 or less, know of media campaigns against impaired driving.

Ninety-one percent of Canadians report seeing these ads on

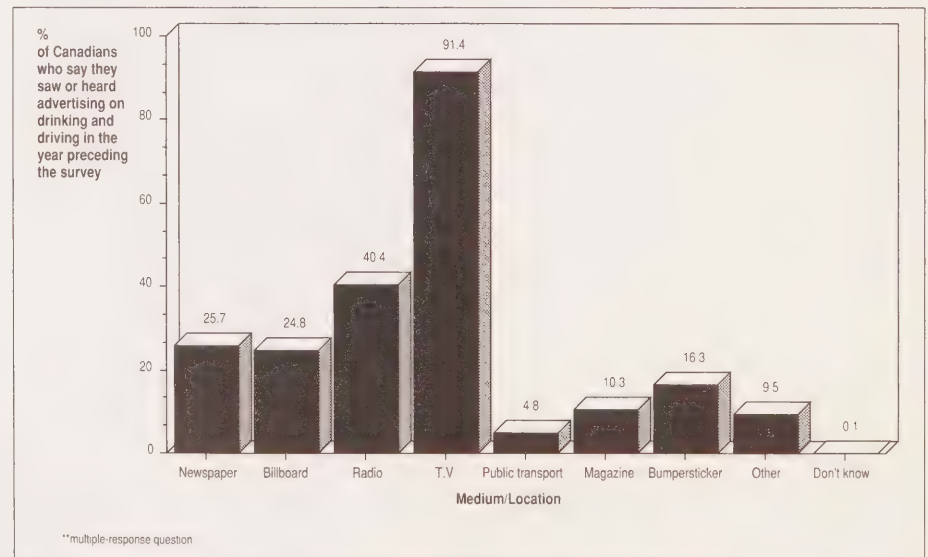
television, compared to the 40% who hear them over the radio. Fewer people report seeing newspaper and billboard advertisements (25%), and awareness levels are lowest for ads in magazines (10%) and ads displayed in public vehicles (5%).

The best-remembered advertising theme is also the simplest — according to 57% of Canadians, it is “don’t drink and drive”. By comparison, the message “accidents happen/people can get hurt when you drink and drive” is recalled best by 27% of Canadians.

Groups and organizations

Almost half of Canadians (48%) say they know of some group or organization which campaigns against drinking and driving. However, awareness does not necessarily imply active

Medium/location of advertising message, among those who say they saw or heard advertising on drinking and driving in the year preceding the survey, age 16 to 69, Canada, 1988**

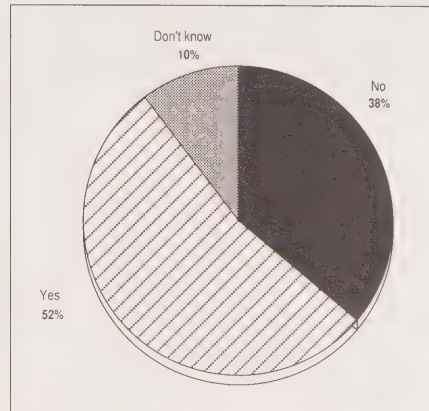


involvement — a mere 6% say they actually take part in organized efforts to reduce impaired driving. Men and women are about equally likely to be aware of anti drinking-and-driving groups (49% of men, compared to 46% of women), and both sexes have a poor record of active involvement in these groups. Young people, although more aware of organized campaigns against drinking and driving than their older counterparts, are only half as likely to be involved in such activities.

Certain types of organizations seem to have a higher profile than others. Almost half of Canadians (48%) know of MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Drivers) or other groups of victims' parents. Other organizations recognized by a substantial proportion of people are Alcoholics Anonymous (24%), and SADD (Students Against Drunk Driving) or other student groups (23%). Only 11% know of police campaigns, and a mere 9% indicate an awareness of government efforts, whether at the federal, provincial or municipal level.

Encouragingly, a large proportion of Canadians are willing to support group efforts against drinking and driving. The survey shows, in fact, that one in every two people in Canada is prepared to commit time, money or both to activities aimed at

"Would you be prepared to support, either financially or with your time, activities in your community designed to reduce drinking and driving?", age 16 to 69, Canada, 1988



reducing the problem. This group of potential supporters includes not only non-drinkers (53%), non-drivers (48%), and those who do not drive after drinking (55%), but a surprisingly high proportion of people in the drinking-and-driving category (46%).

Women are much more likely than men (55%, compared to 41%) to report that they would support drinking-and-driving campaigns in their community. As well, over one-half (57%) of Canadians aged 16 to 24, compared to 42% of those aged 55 or over, say they would give their support to community efforts to curb drinking and driving.

Alternative transportation programs

Half of Canadians aged 16 to 69, including 59% of drinking drivers, know of some program that offers alternative transportation to people who have had too much to drink. However, only 8% of those who are aware of such services have ever used them. Men and women are about

equally likely to know of and to use alternative transportation programs.

While age does not influence people's awareness levels, it does seem to influence their likelihood of using an alternative transportation program. Younger Canadians are considerably more inclined to participate in such programs than are their older counterparts (15% aged 16 to 24, compared to only 6% aged 45 to 54).

The best-known programs are municipal (36%), followed by hotel- or tavern-operated programs (23%) and public transportation programs that use municipal buses or subways (23%). Ten percent of Canadians are aware of programs offered through the efforts of community volunteer organizations.

What Canadians Think About Drinking and Driving

Canadians want their country to be a safe place in which to live. One obvious way to make it safer is to reduce the toll of injuries and fatalities caused by drinking and driving. But do Canadians consider this to be a priority issue? How do they rate drinking and driving in relation to other social problems? How should it be tackled? What measures might deter them, and other people they know, from drinking and driving?

A social issue

Canadians consider drinking and driving to be an important social issue. When asked to rate the importance of impaired driving as compared to eight other social issues, Canadians ranked impaired driving *first*, followed in order of importance by AIDS, family violence, drug use, juvenile delinquency, unemployment, racism, pornography and cigarette smoking.

In general, Canadians of both sexes and from all age groups seem to agree on the relative importance of drinking and driving as compared to other social issues. This is so whether they are drinkers or non-drinkers, drivers or non-drivers, drinking drivers, or individuals who neither drink nor drive.

Prevention programs

Most people believe that a lot can be done to reduce the incidence of drinking and driving. In general, Canadians seem to feel that education is the key — statements that tend to receive the most support are “driver education should include information

on drinking and driving” (97%), and “there should be more educational programs to teach people about drinking and driving” (93%).

Support for other types of measures is also high, as shown below:

- more treatment services for problem drinkers (87%);
- more designated-driver programs in bars and taverns (85%);
- more advertising against drinking and driving (85%);
- stricter enforcement of existing laws (85%);
- more roadblocks and spot checks by police (81%);

- stricter control of the sale of alcohol (67%);

- free transportation to drivers who have had too much to drink (63%);

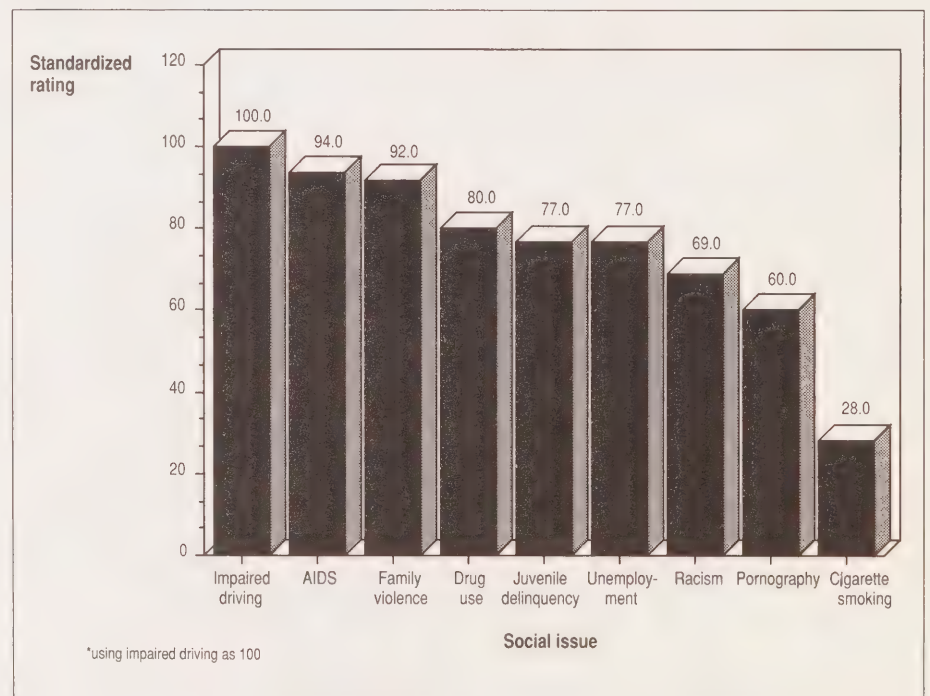
- raising the drinking age (57%); and

- raising the age at which people can drive (50%).

Women are in stronger agreement than men with all these preventive measures; however, the sexes do not differ when it comes to ranking them in order of importance.

As might be expected, Canadians who say they have driven after drinking differ somewhat in approach from those who have

Standardized* ratings of importance for nine social issues, age 16 to 69, Canada, 1988



not. People who neither drink nor drive are more inclined to favour roadblocks and spot checks as a means of reducing the problem. Those who say they have driven while impaired are less likely to support the stricter enforcement of existing laws, less inclined to agree that more advertising is needed, and less likely to think that the sale of alcohol should be more strictly controlled.

Penalties for first offenders

Most Canadians feel that a person who is found guilty of drinking and driving should be punished, even if no accident occurs. Only 9% feel that a first-time offender in a no-accident

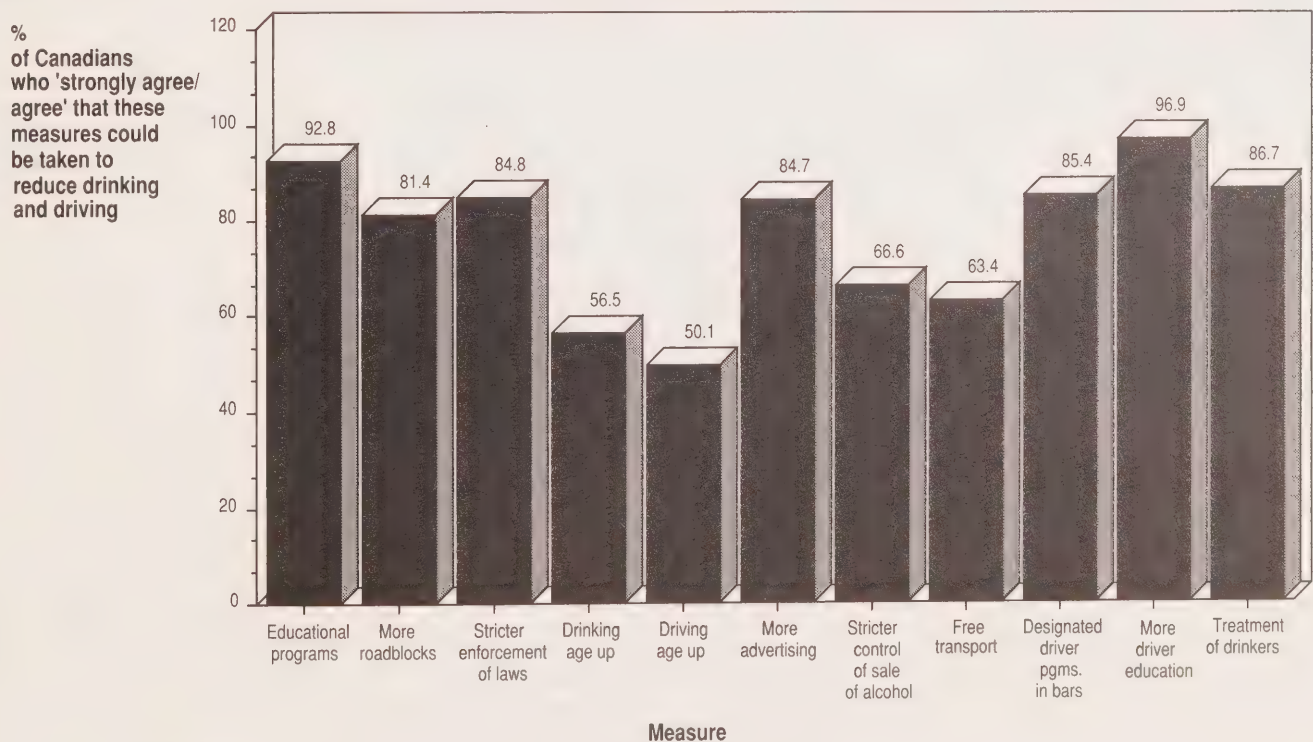
situation should be jailed, but 28% of this group favour a sentence of six months to a year. However, if someone is seriously hurt or killed as a result of a first drinking-and-driving offence, 43% of Canadians think the penalties should include a jail sentence. Seventy percent of this group favour a sentence of six months or more.

Almost three-quarters (72%) of Canadians think the penalties for a drinking-and-driving offence, where there is no accident, should include a licence suspension. Of this group, almost half (45%) say that the driver's licence should be suspended for a period of six months to a year, and 20% say it should be taken away for more than a year. In a

case where someone is seriously hurt or killed, 71% think that the driver's licence should be suspended. Of those, three-quarters (76%) say that the offender's licence should be taken away for more than a year, and 17% suggest a six-month to one-year suspension.

Nearly half (49%) of Canadians believe the penalties in a no-accident situation should include a fine. When asked how much the fine should be, 33% say from \$201 to \$500, and 26% set the amount somewhere between \$501 and \$1,000. Almost one-third (32%) of Canadians believe that when someone is seriously hurt or killed, the driver should be fined. Nineteen percent of this group feel the fine should be

Measures that Canadians think could be taken to reduce drinking and driving, age 16 to 69, Canada, 1988**



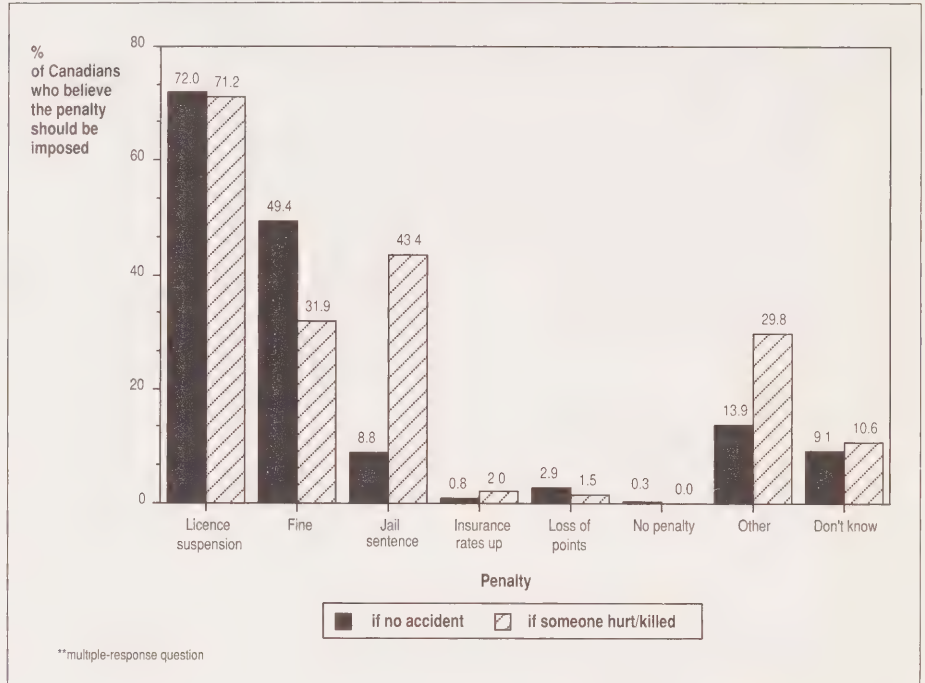
**multiple-response question

somewhere between \$501 and \$1,000, and the same proportion say it should be between \$1,001 and \$2,000. Over one-third (34%) of those who favour a fine say it should be more than \$2,000.

By and large, men and women seem to agree on the types of penalties that are appropriate for a first-time offender, whether or not an accident has occurred. However, younger Canadians appear to favour heavier penalties for a first offence. In fact, they are more likely than people in other age groups to feel that even where there is no accident, the penalty should include a licence suspension, a fine or a jail sentence.

People who drive after drinking are more likely to suggest that the penalties for a first offence — with or without injuries — should include a licence suspension, and less likely to think a jail sentence is in order.

“What do you think the penalty should be for a first drinking-and-driving conviction in which there is no accident?” and one “in which there was an accident and someone was seriously hurt or killed?”, age 16 to 69, Canada, 1988**



Towards the Future

Planners, policy-makers and others who are concerned about drinking and driving in Canada can take encouragement from these survey results. For one thing, the scope of the problem can now be defined with greater precision than at any time in the past. Not only do the results reveal which Canadians are especially vulnerable to drinking and driving, but they also provide us with a clearer understanding of the circumstances in which people drink and drive, and some of the reasons why they do it.

Those working to increase public awareness of this problem can also take heart — their message is reaching an overwhelming number of Canadians. In fact, drinking and driving is widely seen to be an important social issue in this country. Millions of Canadians are already acting on the problem — not only are they trying to avoid drinking and driving themselves, but they are taking steps to prevent their family and friends from doing it. What is more, fully half of Canada's population is ready to support activities aimed at reducing the problem — in time, in money, or in both — and people have plenty of ideas on how to achieve results.

We know, then, that conditions are favourable for the creation of effective intervention programs: awareness levels are high, Canadians are concerned about the issue, and they are willing to support the effort. In short, the potential is there; the challenge lies in tapping it.

